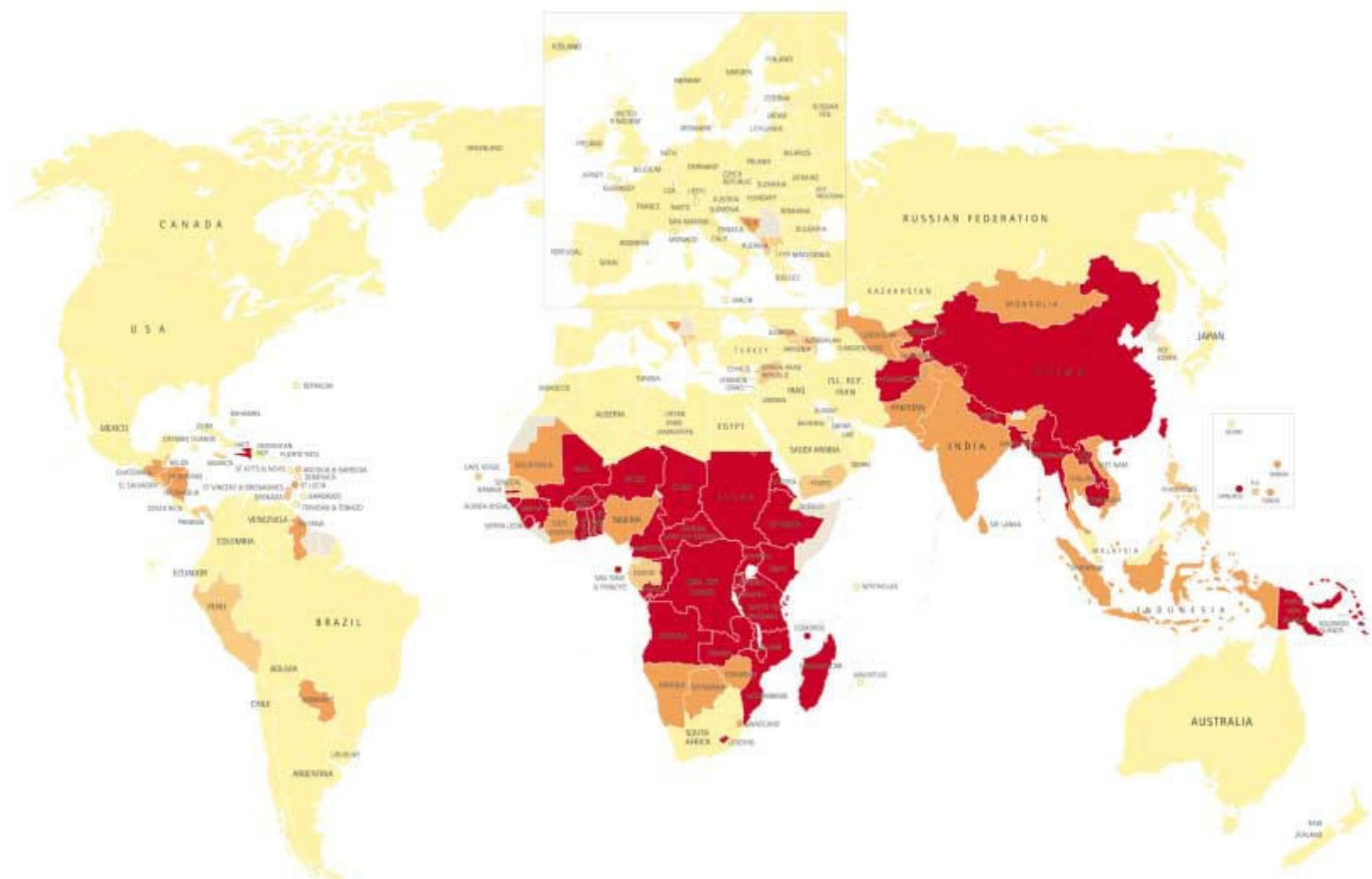




Scale vs. substance? Lessons from a context-responsive approach to market-based stove development in western Kenya

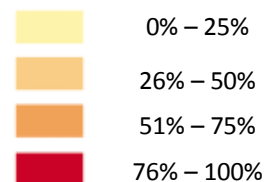


Temilade Sesan | University of Ibadan, Nigeria
temi@gbengasesan.com



Percentage of population using solid fuels (MDG indicator 29), 2003

Source: WHO (2006). Fuel for Life: Household Energy and Health. Geneva: World Health Organisation





Biomass and ICS use in Kenya

- 80% of the population relies on biomass for cooking (IEA 2012)
- Energy poverty intensified by relatively high import prices
- Much greater (market) penetration of ICS in urban than in rural areas
- (Market) supply of ICS is biased towards higher demand in urban areas

Stoves and markets: Push and pull

- Disillusionment with subsidy-based models
- The need for financial sustainability
- The need for scale/scalability
- Advent of 'next-generation' technologies
- Innovative financing *possibilities*, including carbon credits
- Broader shift towards market ideology in development, including BoP models
- The case for ICS as public (health) goods?

The USEPA project



Research methods

- 6-week field study in West Kochieng, one of eight project locations
- 21 interviews with Practical Action staff, community authorities and local energy users
- Purposive sampling representative of supply- and demand-side actors
- Non-participant observation to complement interview data
- Qualitative approach facilitated in-depth contextual analysis

An 'economy of affection'

- Culture and tradition greatly influence cooking and living arrangements
- Gender roles/expectations are rigidly defined
- Women's groups have historically provided social and economic support
- Market relations often do not prioritise the maximisation of efficiency
- PA contextualises its approach in such areas as advertising and credit management

Progress, 100 stoves at a time

‘But now the locations that we have started working in, we have now created 6 groups, and these groups have currently started what is called... village savings and loans. And so when they raise money here, we are trying to talk to them, that when their loans get to the level that they can get 100 stoves by themselves, we will leave that. They get 100 stoves, and they come and sell. So it becomes like revolving for them.’

- Practical Action East Africa Staff 1

Opportunities and challenges

- There are no guarantees
- Empowerment uneven across the board
- Longer-term donor support may be needed
- Final costs sensitive to local incomes
- High impact among low-income populations
- Impact more qualitative than quantitative – trade-off between scale and impact?
- How do we ensure that the poorest can participate substantively in stove markets?

No technical/market fixes...

‘The reliance on solid fuels is so pervasive, it’s not going to stop. Not in a hurry. Even where there is gross fuel scarcity... It’s not like a motor vehicle recall. 5,000 vehicles have had an incident with their cigarette lighters, we’ll call them back, replace that, problem solved. No, it’s not like that.’

- Practical Action East Africa Staff 2